



Town of Warner

Budget Committee – Public Hearing

DRAFT - Meeting Minutes

September 22, 2022 7:00 PM

At 7:04 p.m., Chairman Michael Cutting called the meeting to order and took the roll.

1 – Roll Call

Mike Cutting (Chairman); Dave Minton, Christine Frost (Select Board Representative), Harold Blanchette, Richard Bixby, Michelle Kendrick

Absent: Robert Blake, Ray Martin

Diane Ricciardelli (Town Administrator), Clyde Carson (Finance)

2 – Review of Minutes of July 14, 2022

It was moved by Harold Blanchette and seconded by Dave Minton to approve the minutes of July 14, 2022 as amended.

Mr. Bixby said that he never moved, only his job changed. This should be corrected in the minutes.

Chair Cutting called for a vote on the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

3 – Questions Regarding the Budget from Committee Members - Diane Ricciardelli

Diane said she would read through the questions and would also send them to the recording secretary so they would be part of the minutes.

Mr. Blake had asked about items 01-4194 and 01-4011 and 02-4011. Diane said that these were for prices for oil and propane that were estimates before she had the new numbers locked in, which are \$3.51 for oil and \$1.67 for propane.

Mr. Blake had asked why there was a dollar amount projected for supplies when the actual expense was much higher. Diane said that the expenses have been moved to the Board of Selectmen's budget, per the request of the Budget Committee.

Mr. Blake had asked about the Assessing line item as it is over the projected budget; will they take this into consideration when formulating the new budget? Diane said that they were without an assessing person last year so they were paying an outside source to do what was needed.

Mr. Blake asked about the Highway Equipment Long Term Lease. Does the budget not relate to a new lease that went into effect later in the year? Diane said that they have an October payment due for this lease. There will be an expense for that. She thought it was paid just once a year, in October. There had been no expense shown to date. For this grader, the first expense was from the CIP. The following payments came from the Highway Department budget because it was an operational expense.

Mr. Blake asked about Welfare Director Systems, it is well over the budget and will they anticipate the growth that they have seen? Diane said that this line will be well over budget. Mr. Carson said that the Town is obligated to help people who qualify for help. It is higher than it normally is, but there are a lot of people in need right now. Chair Cutting said this is true; there is a mandate to provide welfare support.

Mr. Blake asked about Long Term Loans. Mr. Carson said the fire truck and solar arrays drive this bottom line. The fire station they pay twice a year for the principal and interest. This is in line with what is budgeted. It is a fixed rate.

Mr. Minton had asked about loans and maintenance repairs. The company they work with is much higher than they've been in previous years. They replaced all the fire extinguishers and do all the maintenance and inspections. She is working with them to figure out if they'll go with another company. She feels that they are higher-priced than others but she needed to have that discussion with the company. The invoices have just come in for parts and labor.

Mr. Minton asked about the Board of Selectmen expenses for the Town Offices. He asked about the expenditures detail YTD. \$1,990 was spent and the budget was for \$1,000. Diane said this was for the Aakwea Ensemble for the Simons School for \$1,850. Mr. Carson said that this is something that comes from a trust fund generally but it did not this time.

Mr. Minton asked about Land use advertising. They looked like they were way under budget as only \$58 was spent so far. Mr. Carson said that if they have a lot of activity there is a higher expense. Diane said they have been using the Intertown Record instead of the Concord Monitor, which is very expensive. She thought that they may need to go back to using the Monitor. This was still to be determined.

Mr. Minton asked about the Police Department – Equipment Maintenance and Purchase. He remembered that they have gone way over this budget in the past years. He saw they were way over the budget already by \$1,300. Diane said there was a replacement of the tasers. The ones they had, in a court of law, would not be justified being used. They were required to get new ones because the company was no longer supporting the use and maintenance of them.

It was asked if the officers have ever had to use their tasers. Chair Cutting said this was a question for the Chief later on.

Mr. Minton asked about the Fire Department – Truck Maintenance, budgeted \$10,500. They've spent about \$100. Is there a large bill coming? Same with the Replacement of Equipment line below this line. Mr. Carson said those things are budgeted high in case they need them. Some expenses for replacement of equipment are made at the end of the year. +

Mr. Minton asked about Highway Paving. He wondered why they had only spent \$1,200 of a \$200,000 line. Diane said that they will have more invoices coming. There are another four months to go before the year is over. Chair Cutting said that in the Roads Committee Meeting they learned that the permits have been completed and signed off on, so the work will be done still. Chair Cutting said that it might be helpful to form another relationship with another company. They currently work with Weaver Bros. and are happy with them, but GMI is another company that seems to be good. They need to go where the best prices are. Diane said that Weaver Brothers gives discounts and materials to the Town sometimes. Christine said that is not a reason to choose a company to work with.

4 – Review of Unanticipated Revenue – Diane

Diane said that they have two grants from the State (Bridge and Block) that total \$260,000. They have sale of property in Town of \$115,000. There are also operating funds of \$152,000 that were not spent. Christine said that the sale of property does not stay with the Town; they only keep what the difference is from what is owed in back taxes.

Diane explained that the auditors need to finish up their audit and do a report, submit it to DRA, she will provide estimated revenues, and then the tax rate will be set. Mr. Carson said the audit was done late because there wasn't anyone there to do it until now. Tax rates have been set in November in the past. Many municipalities are setting their tax rates in November. Warner is far ahead of other Towns with whom I am in contact.

5 – Review of Budget

General Government Buildings - Diane

From the Electricity budget, the amount spent so far is \$2,233.15. The price of electricity has gone up so that number is higher than it was projected.

Heating Fuel budgeted is going to change but she didn't have the new oil price when she made the sheet. That is going to be calculated soon. She now knows the amount per gallon but she needs to look at usage.

Water and Sewer was correct as stated with \$1,400; the last two years there was no festival and the town offices were closed to the public. Now that things are opened back up, the usage has gone up.

Fire Alarm Systems is increased substantially and she is checking to see if there is anything they can do or they may move to another company.

Supplies was moved to Selectmen's budget.

Maintenance and Repairs – they are behind in some things. They need to clean the rugs, window issues need to be taken care of, and there are a number of other items that need to be taken care of. They will continue chipping away on the list. Mr. Carson said the windows in the town office are retrofitted, double-hung windows that do not close. He saw that Towns are eligible for a 30% rebate on replacing windows in an effort to conserve energy.

Propane – Diane said they got a good rate. They were over-budgeted last year. The town offices are open to the public again, so usage will be higher.

Equipment/Inspections – Diane will continue to research prices and see if they need to move to another company.

When asked, the phone charges are under the Board of Selectmen's budget. Diane said she is . It is very involved and is not a simple switch.

Old Graded School Expenses – Warner Community Center

Electricity – There are a lot more people using the building. Boys and Girls Club is moving in this fall. The Food Pantry and Family Closet do not pay rent, but the Boys and Girls Club and another group do pay rent to help with expenses, based on square footage.

Heating Fuel – This was budgeted the same as last year; \$13,000.

Water/Sewer – Diane said that Ray Martin figures that their projected amount is right on at \$1,100.

Sprinkler/Fire Alarm is at \$850. In 2020 it was over \$1,000 in the past.

Supplies – this line has been moved.

Repairs – This will be a continuing line item to address several issues.. We are receiving a grant to do an energy audit of the building.

Propane – This is very close to what it will be, perhaps a little bit more. Chair Cutting said the only thing they use propane for in that building is a gas stove. Mr. Carson said the stove is ancient and has a live pilot. Down the road they may want to consider getting a new stove.

Old Fire Station

Diane said there are no expenses for this except for \$200 in the Building Maintenance line. This is the fire station on Kearsarge Mountain Road.

Diane said for the next meeting in October she will have better numbers for the heating fuel and propane.

Building Inspection

Diane said they have budgeted \$300 for books and supplies. They need the books for the new building codes.

Building Inspector Mileage is \$500. The fee people pay for an inspection includes a charge for this.

Compliance Officer Mileage is at \$100.

Health Department

This is at \$100. Nothing this year was spent. The Town has an opening for a Health Inspector.

Welfare Administration

Direct Assistance is over budget and they've put in for \$20,000 for next year. Mr. Carson said that they could use the contingency line to help cover overages with this line item. Chair Cutting said they can only put in 1% of the total budget into the contingency line. They could increase the amount they generally put into this line. Unused funds cannot be rolled over and encumbered to the next year; they have to be turned back to the General Fund. Also, it has to be used for unanticipated costs. Welfare costs would fit into this as it isn't something that can be accurately budgeted for. The same can be said for Legal costs.

Mr. Carson said that this year, they are doing something different with the reporting due to the new software. The budget information they look at can be arranged to see what the department requests are, what the Select Board requests are, and the Budget Committee's numbers. They can also see the numbers from Town Meeting. This is a giant step forward for the Town. Chair Cutting also said that it will cut down on the time Diane has to spend on the spreadsheets.

The next budget meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2022 at 7:00pm.

Chair Cutting adjourned the meeting at 8:11pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary

Town of Warner